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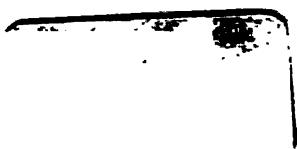
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HUGO OF AVENDON.



HUGO OF AVENDON.

1897

IN FOUR ACTS.

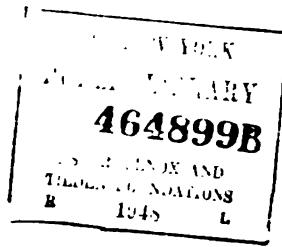
BY

E. L. M.



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1897.

✓



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HUGO, *Count of Avendon.*
DON LOPEZ, *Commander of Oculto.*
ARRAGO
CAMPUZANO
CASADO }
LORIOS } Officers.
GEMINEZ }
FATHER COWRIE } Jesuit Priests.
FATHER GRANZ }
PICAZO, *employed by the Jesuits.*
Officer of the Civil Guard.
DIEGO, *an old servant of HUGO.*
DONNA ISABELLA, *wife of DON LOPEZ.*
CAMELLIA, *daughter of DON LOPEZ.*
STELLA, *wife of HUGO.*
Servants, Soldier, Singers and Masqueraders.

TIME : *the Eighteenth Century.*

COUNTRY : *Spain.*

SCENE : *at Avendon, near the town of Oculto; in Oculto;*
and in Cadiz.



**'Who twines his heartstrings in a single cord
Prepares a lash to scourge away all sense
Of where just effort ends, self-will begins.'**

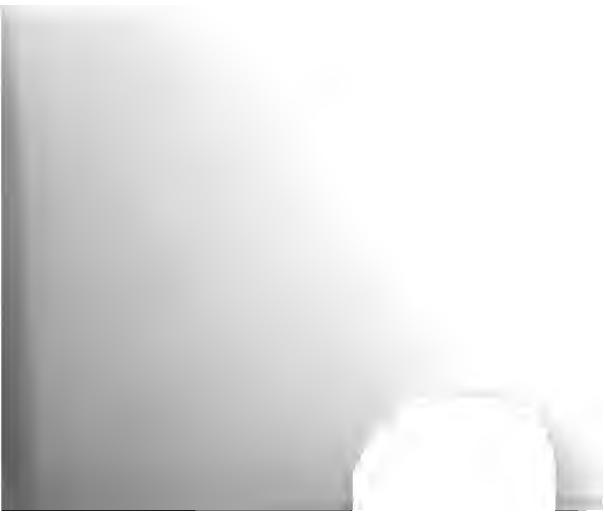
ACT II., SCENE 4.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in GRANZ's House.*

GRANZ and COWRIE.





ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in GRANZ's House.*

GRANZ and COWRIE.

Cowrie:



HOLD from Rome full powers to confirm
Your recent action. Your last reports re-
late

Count Hugo's mind completely is prepared
For some decisive movement on our part.
You have advanced with slow and careful step,
Guiding, not forcing, leading unobserved
Along the path proposed.

Granz. Caution as quick as guilt had tried the way,
Ere I with slow but sure persistence urged.
What power rests in our cause for purest zeal
To reach unselfishly a grand fulfilment !
How great our influence exercised unknown !
We treat not with the multitude, but sway
The minds that move them.

Cowrie. How few one needs to win, to hold the
crowd
We put to better use than speculation !
Men of great thoughts have solved the human mind,
Great men of deeds, the human want of it.

Granz. I placed before romantic youth my view
Of soaring o'er the level of the time,
Freed from the taint of gold, or passion's reign,

Fame's taunting convoy, glory's blood-red stain,
And barred the woman peril, man's great bane—

Cowrie. A peril few escape, and those who do
Lack one deep note of human sympathy.

Granz. A peril he escaped by my resource.
A maiden fair, and willing to be won,
Had roused in him some loving tendency,
Which threat to our design I crossed at once.
Engaging her attention, I employed
The cloak and cowl of generalities,
My hearer's mood would make particular,
To urge upon her, how a lagging love
Grows swift and fiery from a rival's spur.
Not being of the highest delicacy,
She tried a coarse means with a gentle man,
Yielding one Arrago to such extent
Her favours, even in the public gaze,
That pride, which best defends and worst offends,
Cast its chill shadow o'er the dawn of love.
Count Hugo, in a mood of use to us,
Renounced a love he would not scramble for.
Who soothes slight hurts may leave a deeper wound,
And this should be our part.

Cowrie. Has disappointment cut him deep enough,
Leaving its impress ? For such strokes alone
Are valued in the moulding of a life.
Would he had suffered ! If he join our cause
To be a leading actor, not a thing.
He should have learned those lessons of the heart
Which pain alone can teach ; and till its lines
Be fully mastered, vainly we appeal
To other minds.

Granz. He has not touched so sensitive a state ;
But yet, I think, is ripe for argument
Along the course designed.

Cowrie. Relying on your judgment and report,
I go with confidence to urge our son

Upon our mutual way. His varied wealth
You state will not comprise the only gain
Gleaned by our cause with his adherency.

Granz. In his own person, once he is our own,
We gain a brother of no trifling worth.
His presence good, his mind, though immature,
Has climbed some lofty pinnacles of thought
With seeming ease.

I have great hope that with the ripening years,
When youth's tumultuous varyings give place
To steady purpose, Hugo may be found
Among our brothers of the foremost flight.
A strong ambition, trembling in his veins,
I have, with art and his own modesty,
Steered from the risk of too great interest
In State affairs.

Courie. Of all the passions fledged by human
hearts,
Ambition has the strongest sweep of wing,
Soaring through Heaven's gate, swooping on Hell.
Ambition nurtured, where a love denied
Turns back to animate a new desire,
Mounts up, a deathless influence indeed,
To lead, but not to guide.

Granz. A word about oppression had its use.
How proud men are to look upon themselves
As pillars of a persecuted cause,
Particularly when their championship
Attracts more credit than discomfiture,
We have had frequent test.
But rest the means—the end was well in view
When this light-loving spirit whirling by
Disturbed his mind: despite of my advice,
A month ago he quitted his domain.
Some tendril of the brain has been disturbed,
No fibre of the heart.

Courie. My tardy coming was no fault of mine.

Cares of importance held me for a time.
His asking for an interview with you
Upon this day (we're close upon the hour)
May be the prelude to our hope fulfilled,
And may be—something else.

Granz. Two years ago the deed was in my hands
That would have made us heirs ; the old man's will
Had drooped before my own ; the sails were set ;
But all too late ! Swift on the adverse wind
Death beat across our track, and wrecked the barque
Whose name was fortune. Dying ere he signed,
His brother's son, this youth, became the heir.
'Tis but a pause before we hold our own.

Cowrie. An influence past, a present doubt begins ;
Its fall exposing to unmeasured powers
The ground commanded by a force we knew.
We need this man, and all he means to us,
And measures must be taken to secure
His service to our sway. And to this end
We needs must first be masters of ourselves,
And hold no truce with scruples of a sort.
In our great cause I would not spare myself ;
I'd not spare you, nor falter at the means
We may have need to use. Long, long ago
I learned the worthlessness of this poor life,
Save as a painful lesson to be passed.
Pain thrusts appreciation on to joy ;
Let us, who know its use, not shrink to use.

Granz. Over the self-slain spirit of self-will
We take our sacred vow Obedience.
Our Order speaks ; not mine to question why.
What's good for that is good for all the world.

Cowrie. If in my judgment we should hesitate,
Foreseeing a more fitting time arise,
It might be well to leave the youth to me.
His confidence would be restrained for you,
Which would embarrass——

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Count Hugo Avendon has just arrived,
And asks a speedy interview.

Granz. Shall we receive him here ?

Cowrie. Ay, do.

Granz. Ask the Count to enter. [Exit SERVANT.

Granz. You'll find some vacillation in his mood ;
We will not judge what is, but what may be.

Enter HUGO.

Granz. Welcome, my son, most welcome. Your
return
Has been awaited with great eagerness ;
To Father Cowrie I have mentioned you,
And my deep interest in your future lot
Has interested him.

Hugo. My reverent salutation to you, Father ;
My dear adviser ever casts on me
An eye so partial, that I fear to face
His good report.

Cowrie. His interest is eloquence enough
Of the foundation for a deep regard.
It was a kindly chance directed me
In time to welcome your acquaintanceship.

Hugo. Sure of one kindly thought, I welcome two ;
True friendship only finds its friend a friend ;
Changes abound—

Granz. Is there a change in you ?

Hugo. All things are changed for me, for I am
changed.
Sirs, I have found a woman—a woman who to me
Seems true to beauty, beautiful and true—
A common fate ; and yet no common fate
My love has seemed to me. The kindest stars
That ever ruled a double destiny

Have guided to a union close, complete,
Two mortal lives, that Nature in a mood
So full of niggard generosity
Had spared but one immortal soul between.

Granz. You have married a wife?

Hugo. Not yet the bridal bell; but as the moon,
Which floats a silver crescent in the sky,
Is rounded to a globe of pallid gold,
My life is rounded, too. A woman's hand
Has gathered up each thread of my desires,
And twined them in a circle of content
Around her fair white self. Dear friend of mine,
Most patient guide and wisest counsellor,
I never had to ask your sympathy,
Nor question your regard. Rejoice with me
Upon the very threshold of my life
Fate fashioned me a crown of happiness
To win and soon to wear.

Granz. The sole enjoyment that the world affords
To those who strive to live beyond its reign,
Lies in the flowing of its benefits
Towards the friends we love. That on the stream
That bears you Fortune floats the choicest gifts
Fancy could fashion, or desire demand,
Is evident indeed. We trust your path
May lie along the even sands of peace,
Smoothed by a mingled flood of faith and love.

Courie. Let me add my good wish. I speak as one
Who trusts the future may afford the right
That friendship best can give. My brother here
Has been recalled to more important work;
And I, succeeding to his interests,
Cherish the thought that my inheritance
May circle your regard.

Hugo. I truly trust that you will deign to look
On me, and all I have, as greatly blessed
To do you service.

Cowrie. I shall recall your promise in the time
That lies before us. Let me ask the name
That will be changed for yours.

Hugo. A soldier's daughter have I wooed and won,
The only child of General Calavar.
He goes abroad ere eight-and-twenty days
Be added to the store the grasp of time
Steals from eternity.

Cowrie. That date your marriage doubtless will
precede ?
You have not wasted time nor failed to use
The utmost resolution and despatch.

Hugo. Within a month ; 'twas soon, but not too
soon,
I urged for her dear life to come to mine.
And so it comes to pass that ere he goes,
He trusts the greatest treasure of his life
To my unworthy arms. I spared this time
To visit my estate, and intimate
The change so soon to be. To-night, to-night
I leave again till past my marriage-day.
May I express the hope your presence will
Add pleasure to that marriage ?

Granz (after consulting COWRIE by a look). I am re-
joiced to take advantage of
Your kind request, thus need not part from you
So soon as would be needful otherwise.

Cowrie. In gathering up the threads my brother
drops
When he departs, I shall find much to fill
The days approaching. Pardon me, my son,
If I postpone rejoicing to survey
Your happiness until more fitting time ;
But then I trust your fair wife and yourself
Will welcome me as one who entertains
The keenest interest in your future lot.

Hugo. I thank you, Father ; now adieu to you.

Cowrie. One word before we part. There may exist

A perfect love, but do not look for it,
For expectation feeds at joy's expense.
Be moderate in everything but truth.
Virtue and vice are no intrinsic strains;
The application is the test of all.
Let judgment rule thy passions; for their powers,
Once uncontrolled, will turn against thy soul.
Be master of thyself; so shalt thou have
The best of servants and the wisest lord.
To aid thy path in all.

Hugo. Occasion not more surely will arise
And prove your counsel's worth, than memory
Will thank the giver. Now, once more adieu.

[*Exit.*]

Granz. So lost, so gone! Again the woman's hand!
The laboured work of two contriving years
Spent all in vain! I scarcely knew the man;
A youth of wavering mind, prone to await
Another's action, ere he suits his own
To swerving circumstance, changed in a month
To manly resolution and resource.

Cowrie. I like the youth.

Granz. I thought my work well done, a full success
Crowning my efforts; I'll appear at Rome
The failing herald, heralding a failure.

Cowrie. Why failure?

Granz. Why, can you stay the marriage?

Cowrie. No.

Granz. What, then?

Cowrie. We must sympathize with its failure.

Granz. Yes, when it fails.

Cowrie. There are infections that no health of
mind

May hope to combat, doubts that reason flees
Or takes the part of. Given as our grounds

Three persons and two sexes, who shall say
What thing's impossible ?

Granz. In counting three, you reckon on the maid
I spoke of recently, Don Lopez' daughter?

Cowrie. If we find need to act upon the woman,
Here is one half the lever that shall press
These lives apart. I trust that your address
Secure the other half with short delay.

Granz. What would you have me do ?

Cowrie. Marked you his love ? Is not its sudden-
ness

Proof certain that his fancy must be fair ?
And being fair, would not some other life
Have thither sought a welcome destiny ?
Soldiers' fair daughters would win soldiers' love.
Seek some such man when you approach Cadiz.
If one you find, entreat our friends in power
Appoint his duty in this neighbourhood.
If this you cannot do, send me a man
Whom we may trust, as like him as may be.
The rest is sure ; let hesitation sleep.

Granz. Your purpose, then, includes that I should
seek

Some recent suitor of his future wife.

Cowrie. Do so at once ; procure his movement
here,

And leave the rest to me. A hopeful sight :
He carries powder ; all we need's a light.



ACT I.

SCENE 2.—*The Garden of GENERAL CALAVAR'S House.*

HUGO at STELLA's feet.

Stella:



ND so you hastened back? I could believe

You did not hasten, for the time seemed long.

Hugo. Then was my absence sweet.

Stella. To whom?

Hugo. To me—ay, dearest—sweet that it supplied Even one moment to be missed by thee.

Sweet in its recollections; for the hours

Spent in thy thoughts were never spent in vain.

Soft spirits from the realms of fantasy

Came forth to breathe thy name upon the wind,

And fanned the quivering leaves until their shades

Seemed but to trace that name upon the sward.

What thought but Stella could the stars arouse?

What message gathered from the dying sun,

But one day nearer thee?

Stella. What lovers' world is this you lead me through?

What golden fingers tipped with fairy spells

Have touched my lips and trembled on my eyes?

All things were seen, but never seen as now.

I dreamed such dreams; but as I hold thy hand,
Earth's beauty and the joy of lovingness
Seem all so clear to me.

Hugo. Dream on, dear love, there is a lovers'
world

That you and I upon some silver stream
Might float toward, and pluck the golden flowers
From sunlit waters, while above our heads
The bent trees trembling in the breath of eve
Wave farewells to their shadows in the brook.
Then farewell shadows. You and I alone
Would clasp our hands, and only think of love.

Stella. How strange it seems! and yet you never
seemed
To me a stranger. All I found in you
Was mine by right of some acquaintanceship,
Not quite forgotten, and not quite recalled.
Oh, Hugo, Hugo, long before our stars
Had joined our hearts, they must have whispered low
Some thought of each to each. How sweet it
sounds!

Before you even knew me you were mine.

Hugo. Ay, love, it must have been, when voices dim
Swept through the night to breathe the word alone,
They brought some thought of thee; perchance
they touched

Thy lips when sleeping, ere they came to me,
And mingled with their message tender dreams
For thy fulfilment, and for thine alone.

Stella. Was't thus you learned to woo? You
spoke me fair,
When most I wished for fairness. All my life
I ne'er compared myself with my desire,
Till well-content indifference awoke
To search for satisfaction in thine eyes.
How gentle was their judgment! Sweetest words
Ne'er spoke so tenderly.

Hugo. Should tongues grow ever silent, when the
eyes
Usurp the right to speech? should my rapt lips
Breathe only kisses and forget to call
My lady fair? Ay, let poor speech,
That may arouse, but never can express,
The full heart's eloquence, be shamed and still;
And let my lips in one long loving kiss
Lie sleeping upon thine.



ACT I.

SCENE 3.—*A Street in Cadiz.*

GRANZ and PICAZO.

Granz:

NOU'LL recollect each detail? Speak it
o'er,
That I compare my message with my
end.

Picazo. As suitor to the bride of Avendon,
You chose one Campuzano as most fit
For our design. The hungriest research
Reveals no evidence of her delight
In any man's attention; thus your choice
Fell on one who had opportunities
He made no use of.

Granz. He may be used the more.

Picazo. This man, by means of all the influence
You can command, will quickly be transferred
As you arranged, if possible, to do.
And, mindful of alternative commands,
Secured my service as a trusty man,
Whom nature cast so similar in mould
That art need add few features of her own
To warrant that a skilful use of me
Would double the account of Campuzano.

Granz. Add there: I trust his orders—though com-
bined
Beyond authority, in that I send

Two men where he instructed one alone—
 Have been so zealously attended to
 He will excuse my driving my command
 Into the suburbs of obedience,
 In virtue of the possibilities
 He will be quick to note.

Picazo. I mark that well, and also must relate
 That you'll contrive some rumours, and impart
 Their substance to the ears of Avendon ;
 And further—

Granz. Hush ! who comes here ? It is the man
 himself.
 Off ! quick ! I need a little meditation.

[*Exit Picazo.*

Enter Hugo.

Hugo. Well met, indeed ! Arrived, and yet no
 word
 That would have hastened me to welcome you !

Granz. Some minor duties claimed me for a time,
 That occupied without absorbing me.
 Three days within the city I have spent,
 And have not been unmindful of my friend ;
 Looked on your future wife, and heard of her
 In terms that justify your ardent love.
 Grateful for love, although compelling it ;
 Proud of herself, because she pleases you ;
 Needing your strength, and yet sustaining it ;
 True to her beauty, beautiful and true,
 You will not be surprised that I should wish
 To claim acquaintance with so rare a maid.

Hugo. I judged your judgment, ere you came to
 judge ;
 Once she were seen and heard, I had no doubt
 Of every sense confirming my delight.

Granz. From all report your choice has been confirmed

In no uncertain way. The consciousness
That you succeeded where another failed,
Though tempering a generous rival's joy,
Will add the satisfaction that your prize
Was gained, not granted, and your homage deep
Chosen, not taken as a rarity.

Hugo. Though not the first whose humbled spirit
bent

In recognition of her rarity,
I neither claim a keen competitor,
Nor felt the need of rivalry to prove
Sincerity and truth in her I love.
If any name with hers has reached your ear,
Their combination is unwarranted.

Granz. Perhaps not rivals.

Hugo. With whom did I compete ?

Granz. This is the strangest ignorance indeed !
I listened to it as a public tale,
And did not check what seemed so freely known.
One Campuzano was described to me,
As preface to your suit.

Hugo. His name to me is nothing but a name ;
'Tis idle talk.

Granz. The knowledge of a rumour may be turned
To equal use with knowledge of a truth.
Neglect it not ; by it opinion's bent.

Hugo. What care I for opinion so achieved ?

Granz. Recall a time-worn saying of our time :

‘ ‘Tis not enough to note a birth,
When *truth* with rumour marries.

In law regard opinion's worth,
In life mark whom it carries.’

Hugo. What is the folly ?

Granz. You ought to know, I crossed the tale at
once.

A young girl speaking to me of your suit,
And praising you in terms I'll not repeat,
Seemed pleased to think your bride, for whom she
shows

A fond affection doubtless warranted,
Had passed by Campuzano for your sake.
From what she said, though she spoke heedlessly,
I gathered he had been formidable.

Hugo. So little so, that we have met but once.
All I can say of him is, I believe
That his affection, if it ever lived,
Had need of little for its nourishment.
She never stooped to callous vanity,
Regarding but the tributes to her power.
She is no truer to her chosen love
Than true to all the world.

Granz. There are such women ; she no doubt kept
faith,
As her instinctive honour would command.
I know no finer test of womanhood
Than her behaviour to unwelcome love.
To keep a silence, easily construed
To be concealment for another's sake,
Is no slight task for inexperience.
And her discretion merits your regard
Still more than, in this case, her confidence.

Hugo. True confidence confides no more than
truth.

Additions would be falser than omissions.
Have you no details ?

Granz. In telling all, I'll not presume to judge
The truth or falsity of rumoured fact,
When you who know the actors can decide
On their capacity for such a part.
He's hailed as one who might expect regard,
Worthy of love, if not quite lovable,
Which for a time she seemed to recognise;

But shortly, ere you came upon the scene,
 Had altered in her welcome of his suit.
 A difference, cold words, and colder looks,
 Roused his resentment. In his haste he tried
 Avoidance born of will, yet so unwilling,
 When love, not scenting danger, stooped to pride.
 The watchful spirits, who are so informed
 Of all their neighbours' acts, at once alert,
 Awaited the development in vain.
 You came in haste ; and ere attention fixed
 A serious thought on you, had gained your end.
 I have not been informed of more than this,
 Though this may be too much.

Hugo. You've been misled. 'Tis no uncommon
 thing

For rumour to mislead. This idle tale
 Springs from no truthful source, or its career
 Has furnished it with features gathered up
 From every form of nature it has passed,
 Until its very essence is o'erlaid,
 Its native state unrecognisable.
 That harmless seeds may grow to harmful weeds,
 We need not this to prove.

Granz. You will not speak of it ?

Hugo. Not I.

Granz. Of all men I have known, you can afford
 Perhaps the best to shun unwelcome themes.
 So broad a view of happiness achieved
 Can meet few mortal eyes, and as the gaze
 Sweeps o'er each feature of your future life,
 Their harmony surprises and delights.

Hugo. Full well I know, and oft I gather up,
 The threads which woven with contentment yield
 So fair a mantle to wrap round a life.

Granz. A home so fair, a destiny so bright,
 A wife whose nature Mother Nature formed
 In her most noble mood, are rare sweet gifts.

How happy is your lot to hold the power
To freely shower riches, station, honour,
On her you love, and feel her unselfish love,
That would have yielded all for your dear sake,
Will have no cause to sacrifice one wish
In coming to you ! Though the gentle heart
Can greatly bear and constantly endure,
Still, gentle natures pine for gentle fates.
It is your privilege to so combine
Your action with your will, and thus secure
The choicest fortune for your chosen love.

Hugo. I will not keep you now. But one day
more,
And then my marriage-day. [Exit.

Granz. Upon the planet of your memory
I kill myself. But shall I fall alone ?

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Castle at Oculto.*

DONNA ISABELLA, CAMELLIA, and ARRAGO.





ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Castle at Oculo.*

DONNA ISABELLA, CAMELLIA, and ARRAGO.

Donna Isabella :

DAUGHTER, you are more silent than your
wont.
The tongue of youth should merrily race
on,

Not need a special spur to start its course.
Though in the council-chambers of the world
The greatest noise is made by silent youth—
Or so they say.

Camellia. ‘They say,’ that tells so much and knows
so little.

Arrago. Would you prefer us to relate alone
Those things we truly know?

Camellia. I like a man to tell the honest truth,
And more when it’s amusing.

Donna Isabella. Ah, we are curious about every-
thing except the truth!

Camellia. Why should women be described as
being curious about things, and men as taking an
intelligent interest in them?

Donna Isabella. How good you are to-day!

Camellia. You frighten me. The good are terrible!
Do I, then, look on others’ miseries
As judgment due, while my misfortunes shape

Their clouding presence to my self-content
As virtue's trials ? I really am not good.

Donna Isabella. I sometimes think so.

Camellia. It does not matter. There are good
enough,

While virtue is so common a profession.

Arrago. More common than the soldier's.

Camellia. Never a word against a soldier !

Arrago. A soldier thanks you.

Camellia. No thanks, I pray. I am not fond of
thanks.

Donna Isabella. What are you fond of? Neither
this nor that.

This one displeases you ; him you despise.

'Woman is but the echo of some man.

Friendship between two women's possible
Only when each in her most secret heart
Looks down upon the other.' Come, you must
Feel great dissatisfaction with yourself,
To be so hardly pleased with all the world.

Camellia. Content with one's content with all the
world.

Why should I be content ?

Donna Isabella. Come, we will to the garden. Mid
the flowers,

Casting their essence to the scented breeze,
Amid the hush of Nature, you may find
Some shadow of its gentle influence
Fall over you.

Camellia. No, I'll not go. I could not walk so far.
I'm wearier than I look.

Donna Isabella. As you will.

[*Exit.*]

Camellia. You are cheerful company, Señor Arrago !
Has the hush of Nature cast its gentle influence
over you ?

Arrago. No ; I can speak to you, if I may speak
Of what I do not fully understand.

Camellia. I fear too wide a subject for my brain.
Arrago. 'Tis not too wide a subject for my heart.
Camellia. A wide subject? 'Tis the fat lady Señor
Geminez told me of.

Arrago. What did he tell you?
Camellia. Nay, it's too wide a subject to discuss.
Arrago. It is yourself I cannot understand.
Camellia. You cannot understand me—me! a
woman!

A simple child of Nature, guileless, mild,
As women ever are. Oh, how you mock!
Arrago. A truce to mocking. Are you so agreed?
Camellia. You question if I am agreeable?
Arrago. I question nothing but the right to speak.
Camellia. Rights should be ever subject to debate.
Unquestioned rights bring questionable wrongs.

Arrago. Have I the right to speak about myself?
Camellia. If you are sure it touches you alone.
Arrago. I fear it would; yet would not fail un-
known.
Camellia. Better to die unknown than known a
failure.

Arrago. Have I offended you? A change bears
hard
Upon the unchanged. Once you showed to me
A kinder spirit—

Enter DON LOPEZ and CAMPUZANO.

Lopez. Camellia, this is Señor Campuzano,
Who comes to join our forces from to-day;
A future comrade to you, Arrago.
I know you, with your brother-officers,
Will show him every aid and courtesy,
That he may feel he is no stranger to us.
Arrago. It will be a pleasure to us, sir.

Lopez. Where is your mother? I expected her
To be with you.

Camellia. She had one moment left us as you came,
To go into the garden. Shall I fetch her?

Lopez. No; I will go to her. Wait you awhile;
I'll not be long.

{*Exit DON LOPEZ.*}

Camellia. Are you quite a stranger here, señor?

Campuzano. Quite, I regret to say. My friends
were few,
And now are far.

Camellia. But that can soon be mended. You will
find

We can be very friendly, while we can
Have our own way in all.

Campuzano. That your own way would be a plea-
sant one,
I can at once perceive; and if I may
With your permission join you on your way,
I shall not be more honoured than obliged.

Camellia. You have spoken to a woman before,
señor.

Campuzano. I have listened to more than have
listened to me.

Camellia. How much have you learned?

Campuzano. Too little, I fear, to teach.

Camellia. You are not like some charming friends
of mine. The less they know, the more they are
ready to teach.

Campuzano. And still they charm.

Camellia. Yes; innocence is ever charming.

Arrago. Except to the innocent.

Camellia. It was no sympathy taught you that.
Where were you stationed last, señor?

Campuzano. At Cadiz.

Camellia. Cadiz! You knew General Calavar?

Campuzano. I have served under him.

Camellia. Then, you knew his daughter, now the wife of Count Avendon?

Campuzano. I did so, madam.

Camellia. Did you not know Count Avendon's domain

Lies near to us—indeed, o'erlaps the town?

Campuzano. I had heard so, madam.

Camellia. Then friends will soon remove your solitude.

Campuzano. I cannot call them friends of mine. The Countess I knew slightly. Count Avendon I have never spoken to. Indeed, they would probably recognise neither me nor my name.

Camellia. Is she a beautiful woman, señor?

Campuzano. Men who would scorn a lie have called her so.

Camellia. Doubtless with many suitors?

Campuzano. Indeed, I cannot say. I knew her so little.

Camellia. Then, you were not so great an admirer of beauty as to seek a closer acquaintance?

Campuzano. I am unhappily a poor man, madam, and, I believe, a modest one; and to be either of these secures the possession of few friends; and to be both of these is too often to have none.

Camellia. Will you come into the garden, señor? I should like to speak to you of Cadiz.

[*Exeunt CAMELLIA and CAMPUZANO.*]

Arrago. I looked upon her loss of Avendon
As my great gain, and still no strong advance.
I love not friendless strangers; they become
Too friendly with our friends, while strange to us.

[*Exit.*]



ACT II.

SCENE 2.—*A Country Road near Avendon.*

COWRIE and PICAZO (as CAMPUZANO).

Cowrie:



HIS is no ordinary enterprise,
And there must be no error in its course ;
No tempting danger to display resource,
Nor taking risks that never need be run.
To fail were more than failure ; on its heel
Treads something more than you or I would meet.

Picazo. You need not fear for my solicitude ;
In sober times I'm serious enough.
There'll be no overleaping of your will
To make myself of greater consequence.
Myself can rein myself upon demand ;
All shall be curbed save that which you command.

Cowrie. This use I have to which you will be put
Without delay. Each night at eight o'clock
An old and trusted servant leaves the Hall,
Having recounted, as his duty is,
All that has passed on Avendon's domain.
This man, in your disguise, you will accost
In casual converse, yet seem alert ;
Seize on some phrase, as though it were a sign,
And ask his message to you.

Picazo. All this can be accomplished. After this

Cowrie. O'erlook he hesitates to comprehend
Your feigned meaning. Treat his wonder as
Excess of caution rather than amazement.
Lose patience at his tardiness, and ask,
'Come you from Avendon?' He'll answer, 'Ay'
Declare yourself the man and give a sign
To indicate your title to his trust.

Picazo. The way grows clear. I mention there a
lady?

Cowrie. Well caught! you have the spirit of the
thing.

Thus force him to suppose that you expect
A message from his mistress. From that point
Resign the road to his initiative.
Now, faithful servants are like other men,
Too prone to show their speciality.
And with intelligence enough to seize
Such chance of proving his fidelity,
He ought to bait a trap to catch himself,
And snare his master with him.

Picazo. No purpose could be clearer. Every hint
Shall have its application.

Cowrie. You should not fail. I've gauged the old
man well.

His conduct ought to suit my estimation.
With sense enough, but not too sensible,
Extremes of mind can both slip calculation.

Picazo. He may invent a message—

Cowrie. So I hope.

Be grateful for it, and consult with me.

Picazo. But should he bid me follow?

Cowrie. In that case

You must be wary, and avoid the step,
Rousing as slight suspicion as you can.
I leave the means to you. A last resource
Would be to simulate distrust of him.
Avoid that, if you can, and be discreet.

Picazo. If fault there be, it shall be none of mine.
This suits my vanity, and hits my mood ;
You may depend upon me.

Cowrie. I leave you now ; the moment is at hand.
Give me your mantle ; in the fading light
You might deceive e'en Campuzano's sight. [Exit.]

Picazo. Oh, who would be a married man !

Cowrie (*returning*). If you can do so, press upon
our friend

A golden warrant of your earnestness.

Picazo. I doubt his taking it.

Cowrie. I doubt his will, but if he cherish hopes
Of your beguilement, he will scarce decline.
'Twill be an indication to our sense
Of what he meditates.

Picazo. I will remember it. [Exit COWRIE.]

Picazo. What was I thinking of ? Oh, marriage
—a pinnacle I would never be set on. Very well
for a woman, for she can better look down on
others, and a woman likes to look down. When
a man is successful, his wife looks down on his
friends ; when he is a failure, she looks down on
him. Poor married men ! Poor women too ! For
the man who's simply fit for nothing else is sure
to be a devil amongst the women. So we must
forgive them much, and to the fairest the most
forgiveness, for they need it most. Now to gain
the old man's attention ! (*Draws in the road with
his sword.*) That should be a fair beginning, and
yonder comes the means for a fair ending.

Enter DIEGO.

Picazo. Good-even to you.

Diego. Good-even, sefior ; a fine night.

Picazo. For whom ?

Diego. For those who choose to enjoy it.

Picazo. Ah ! can you read signs, good friend ?

Diego. What signs ?

Picazo. What have we here in the road ?

Diego. Two lines, sefior.

Picazo. Well, will they meet ?

Diego. If you desire it, and Our Lady will it.

Picazo. Right ; I am the man.

Diego. What man ?

Picazo. Doth not the lady will it ?

Diego. If you desire it.

Picazo. Then give me the letter.

Diego. You mistake, I have no letter.

Picazo. The message, then.

Diego. Nor message for you.

Picazo. I say, I am the man. I say again, will they not meet ?

Diego. I do not know.

Picazo. Then, I will tell you. Though a bar be drawn, may not a bar be broken ?

Diego. It may indeed.

Picazo. Then, can you doubt ?

Diego. I am beginning to believe.

Picazo. Then, away with your last doubt ! I give Cadiz.

Diego. Is it yours to give ?

Picazo. Old man, you mock a lover. Have some thought of your romantic days.

Diego. I will mock you no longer.

Picazo. You come from Avendon ?

Diego. Ay.

Picazo. From a fair woman at Avendon ?

Diego. Perhaps.

Picazo. Ah ! now you recollect. Your caution's good,

But it's extremity's paralysis.

What message have you ?

Diego. From a fair lady.

Picazo. Well remembered.

Diego. And a noble lady.

Picazo. I can't dispute it.

Diego. Who dwells at Avendon.

Picazo. I'm glad you remember. My nerves quivered a moment. The first sign of all you gave with the wrong hand.

Diego. Ah, so I did. You do not think of danger?

Picazo. Not from the Count. Suspicion had no chance

Of breaching his delicious ignorance.

Diego. Then, will you follow me?

Picazo. She warned me against being seen with you.

Diego. Ah, true. A lonely road's not all secure.
Then listen: In the glades of Avendon
A quiet grove sleeps in the summer night,
Lulled by the fragrant breath of orange-trees,
That nod their languid branches in the breeze.
Be there within an hour, content to wait.

Picazo. I will not fail. The way to reach the grove?

Diego. Some space before the gates along the left
A wicket breaks the hedge's symmetry.
'Tis barred within, but easy to surmount.
Once over that, a woodland path appears,
And plunges in the trees. Follow its course;
Your passage will lie down a gentle slope,
That seeks a tiny stream. A rustic bridge
Bestrides its playful course; rising beyond,
The promised grove appears.

Picazo. Look for me there before the hour has passed.

I must reward you.

Diego. No, not for me—at least, till afterwards.

Picazo. All payments should be mine. She takes the risk;

I nothing venture. Never miss reward.

Diego. Well, if you will, I can repay it all.
Be sure that someone meets you in the grove.

[*Exit* DIEGO.]

Picazo. Don't be too sure. I doubt their meeting me.
'Tis done! 'tis well done! and I did it all.
That grove would suit me in good company.

Enter COWRIE.

Cowrie. Have you succeeded?

Picazo. Exactly as you said. The old man speeds
To tell his master, and manœuvre me
Into a nest of hostile company.

Cowrie. Where?

Picazo. A wicket on the left leads to a grove,
That borders on some stream.

Cowrie. I know it well; he chose it cunningly.
Well, we must act at once.

Picazo. Within the hour.

Cowrie. Would you meet him?

Picazo. What! with a retinue?

Cowrie. He'll go alone; you need not fear for that.
How can you use the sword?

Picazo. So much depends upon my adversary.

Cowrie. That will not do. A sword defeat would
sting;

But there must be no risk to either side.
Your part's complete to-night; the rest is mine.

[*Exeunt.*]



ACT II.

SCENE 3.—*A Room in Avendon.*

HUGO alone.

Hugo:

IS this design? Was truth upon the
tongues
That muttered Campuzano's name with
hers?
A month scarce gone, and here before our gates
To reappear! Can chance and innocence
Combine to rear such strange coincidence?
My ignorance assumed might lead resolve,
Clutching at hope, or springing from despair,
To such a leap of rude audacity.
What Campuzano was, and is, and would be,
To seek degrades, to leave unsought derides.
While in Cadiz, I chose the silent part.
Should she alike decide, I cannot speak.

Enter STELLA with a book.

Stella (reading). ‘ ‘Tis not some regal gift it
brings,
But what it does for common things.’
What is that true of, Hugo?
Hugo. Of love sometimes.

Stella. 'By human nature's first decree,
Love exercises sovereignty.'

Tell me that's true.

Hugo. It ought to be.

Stella. You don't believe in love ?

Hugo. Yes, yes, I do. What else have you to tell me ?

Stella (reading). 'Tis something in the darkest hour

To greet another's snow-white flower.'

What does that mean ?

Hugo. Belief in someone, surely.

Stella. Ah, you believe in me ?

Hugo. I think I do.

Stella. Then, tell me what is wrong. Why, even now

You seem to be disturbed. The whole long day
A sterner spirit than I ever knew
Has dwelt upon you—shadows on your heart
That you've not shared with me. Be kind to me,
And fair to me, as I would be to you.

Hugo. I trust to always be as fair to you,
As you to me. Perhaps I may be more.

Stella. Then, tell me all.

Hugo. This, surely, must be nothing but your dream.

Why should my thoughts be dark ? They only dwell,

As I watch you, on what your life had been
Before we met ; no haunting spirit there
To mar my peace of mind ; no dreary ghost
Of bygone fancy, raising its gaunt head
To rob me of my right, or challenge me
To battle for the love-light of your eyes.

First favoured is well favoured ; how should I
Feel less than satisfied to trace the past ?

Stella. There's nothing in my past that could offend

The most exacting love.

No, it's not there. You do not understand
How, having lived in love's own partial eyes,
I shrink a husband's calmer scrutinies.

A month at home—and you're dissatisfied!

Hugo. Dissatisfied! The present's all content:
Yet doubts of Fortune's constancy arise;
Her smile's so oft the grin around the lips
That swallow up our best.

Stella. Shall I play Fortune, and torment you
now,

Sweeping away remembrance of your joys
In recollections of a wilful wife?
I'll be the penalty you'll pay to Fate
For all that Fortune brought you unachieved,
The torment of your life, dispelling thought
Into a hazy cloud of wonderment.

Hugo. While through the mist twin stars of truth
and love

Shine constant sentinels of womanhood,
The clouds may gather, and the night come on.
Someone to trust, something to venerate,
And time can master Fate.

Stella. Ill Fortune and ill Fate are haunting you;
What grim attendants for a bridal train!
Let's wander in the past, if no sweet scenes
The present or the future bring to view.
Can you recall one crimson-tinted eve,
Standing beside the margin of a lake,
While from the woods the nightingale's 'Good-night'
Trilled sweetly o'er the waters 'All is well,
We promised one another, with a smile
At promise being needful, 'Confidence'?
Oh, that's a time I love to linger o'er;
I was so confident.

Hugo. And so confiding, I remember it.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Diego has returned, my lord ; and asks if he can see you.

Hugo. I will come to him.

Stella. Let him come in here.

Hugo. Tell him to do so, then. [Exit SERVANT.
An hour ago, or little more, he left.
What has occurred since then ?

Enter DIEGO.

Well, old friend, what has happened ?

Diego. Someone in trouble, sir—someone I love.
I ask my lady's pardon, but I would speak to you alone.

Hugo. You will forgive my leaving you awhile ?

Stella. No, I will go ; the night is warm and light ;

I'll walk upon the terrace for a time. [Exit.

Hugo. What trouble is it ?

Diego. It may be none, although I thought it right

To speak to you alone. 'Tis hard to tell
My duty in this case—I ought to speak ;
Though speech were insult, silence might be shame.

Hugo. Does it touch me or mine ?

Diego. Beyond my feeble powers it is to tell
The meaning of to-night. Whether I chanced
Upon a knowledge that you ought to share,
Or am the dupe of my anxiety,
I cannot tell. Forgive me if I err ;
My thoughts are all for you.

Hugo. Fear no reproach from me—I know your truth.

No honest-purpos'd action could offend me.

Diego. All things pursued their common course
to-night,

Till past the gates, some way along the road,
A stranger met me ; we exchanged 'Good-night' ;
He asked a question—I forget its sense ;
My answer seemed to strike him. He grew keen ;
Looked warily at me, and spoke of signs.
A hazardous remark encouraged him :
He pointed in the road, and there I saw
Two lines were drawn unmingled, side by side :
Then questioned me if they were like to meet.
I said ' If he should wish it '—random words
Secured the mark of confidence again.

Hugo. What kind of man was he ?

Diego. A soldier's dress and bearing, ready tongue,
Eager in speech, and confident in tone.

Hugo. What happened then ?

Diego. In turn he gave a sign—I thought him
mad—

Then asked a message from me ; then a time ;
Then place of meeting ; then a written word ;
Misread my doubts ; lost patience, and exclaimed :
' Come you from Avendon ? ' I listened then,
And questioned him to learn my character.
He gave it freely. I was go-between.

Hugo. And you came from ?

Diego. We spoke no names—a fair and noble lady
That dwells at Avendon.

Hugo. Ah !

Diego. My lord, my lord, make not too much of
this ;

It may be but my folly and deceit.

Hugo. No more than that ; but folly and deceit,
'Twould only make a woman or a world.

Diego. Had it not happened so, the thought had
been

Too insolent for thought. It was but right

To speak of it, though one poor incident
Is little evidence.

Hugo. There's little in one feature to define ;
But testimony must be counted truth,
When all the features bear the same expression.

Diego. Will you hear more ?

Hugo. How did you part ?

Diego. I framed a message for him to entrap
An opportunity to meet again.
He waits within the hour within the park.

Hugo. Where ?

Diego. The orange grove.

Hugo. He gave no name ?

Diego. One word he gave, as though it were a
sign

That I might trust him by : he said, ' Cadiz.'

Hugo. No more to-night, good Diego. That is
all—

That will be all—to-night.

Diego. And nothing else ?

Hugo. No, not to-night.

Diego. May I not go with you ? You cannot hide
Your purpose from me ; I foresaw it all.

Hugo. No, not to-night ; I meet this man alone.

Diego. My lord, forgive me, if you chance to
fall—

You might do so—have I the right to act ?

Hugo. Don't hint such things ; and yet to lie
forgot,

While foul dishonour stalks across my grave
To my inheritance ! Do you love life ?

Diego. My lord, for your sake only.

Hugo. If I should fall, on the eternal shore
I'll wait for you to tell me—it is done.
Don't harm her, Diego. Deal thy stroke on him.

If this be sin, why, then there is no God !

Diego. He shall not live.

Hugo. Leave me, I pray ; it is the kindest deed.

[*Exit* DIEGO.]

They come ; I see them — mocking, mouthing
fiends,
That stamp upon my soul with fiery feet,
And spurn me to the deeds that madmen do.
And then their chorus, ‘ False—thy wife is false.’
Yon fellow with the mould upon thy brow,
That leads the dance, what have I done to thee ?
She never lived, you say, she whom I loved—
The spirit that I loved—my fancy breathed
Within that radiant form—it never lived.
How could it die ? Hark, voices ! No, not now.

[*Exit*.]

Enter STELLA.

Stella. Come in this way ; you see I’m all alone.

Cowrie (*entering*). ’Tis someone’s loss. Your
husband is not here ?

Stella. No ; I am all alone.

Cowrie. There sometimes rests deep peace in
solitude ;

And peace is still the purpose of our lives.

Stella. May we not live in peace, not look to death
Alone to yield its sweetness ?

Cowrie. Ay, you may live in peace—if you can
find it.

Stella. Find peace ! It ever reigns where true love
dwells.

You have not seen amidst a multitude,
Where man but joins with man to seek for self,
Across the flushing sea of eagerness,
A well-loved face that overlooks the throng,
Turning to yours, and one true loving look,
Flashing such sweet communion of the soul,
That all the hurried clamour of the time
Fades in the far-away, and all is peace.

Cowrie. That moments of such ecstasy arise
I can believe, but doubt their power to last.
A shadow at the best is human love,
A dim reflection of the love Divine.

Stella. Would not the image of a changeless
form

Be constant, true, unvarying, unmoved ?

Cowrie. Only a mirror, calm and clear and still,
Can shadow forth the truth. Poor human hearts
Are but as mirrors—clouded, quivering, dull—
One time reflecting something near Divine,
Another bending to distorted use
Some form of beauty only rendered true.
All things depend upon their atmosphere.
Knowledge is pleasure ; light is true delight ;
There is no sorrow but obscurity.

Stella. Yes ; there is sorrow in obscurity.

Cowrie. You meant those words !

Stella. Did I ?

Cowrie. Something is troubling you.

Stella. I do not know.

Cowrie. I could not quite believe in love and
peace—

We're not so fiery o'er a principle—
Until some cherished illustration's failed us.

Stella. Nothing has failed me yet.

Cowrie. 'Tis sadder to have failed.

Stella. I may have done so.

Cowrie. Is your husband well ?

Stella. I think he is.

Cowrie. Troubled, perhaps ?

Stella. I do not know.

Cowrie. A trouble that a woman may not share,
That woman may have caused. Let him be sure
Of your affection ; but let worry sleep.

Stella. I cannot see an anxious face and not be
anxious too.

Cowrie. Faces are gravestones, not the books of life.

You cannot read what lives, but what has died.
Is your husband in ?

Stella. I think he is ; but shall we look for him ?

Cowrie. Right willingly, my lady, an you please.

[*Exount.*]



ACT II.

SCENE 4.—*A Grove in Avendon.*

Hugo (alone) :

STILL as the grave except my thought—my thought.

O memory, thou art inopportune !
Lie dead beside the rest. He does not come ;
Has conscience summoned fear to supplement
Her o'erborne forces, and their mingled flood
Rolled down triumphant doubt upon resolve ?
Can some true herald have encountered him,
And taught the error of his confidence ?
Hark ! down the avenue I hear the leaves
Like sentinels are whispering, ‘ He comes ! ’
My sword—my sword ! Hew from the brand of
shame
That darkest stain of shameful sufferance.

[Conceals himself.]

COWRIE comes down the path.

Cowrie. The stars like golden pillars float serene
Upon a tideless sea. Ye flowers of night,
Ye best adorn the realms of solitude—
That solitude that summates Nature’s soul
To yield her sympathy. What need to think
Of worldly love, of human hopes and fears,

When every flower unfolds a thought Divine,
When every glade breathes spirits on the wind
To bear me company? Dreams! what are dreams?
The phantom shadows of reality,
Or spirits with a numbed identity,
'Twixt two mortalities. How sorrows fade
Before night's calm, yet, passing into shades,
Draw forth divinest pity!

Hugo (advancing). This is no solitude.

Cowrie. You here?

Hugo. Seeking your spirit, envying your thoughts.

Cowrie. Are they not free to you?

Hugo. Ay, free to come, were others free to go.

Cowrie. Sad thoughts alone are tyrants; joyful
ones

Are but too ready to renounce their rule.

But you and sadness!

Hugo. One thought has mastered me.

Cowrie. Take heed of that absorption in one
theme,

That brings oblivion of right and wrong.

Who twines his heart-strings in a single cord,

Prepares a lash to scourge away all sense

Of where just effort ends, self-will begins.

Hugo. Would I could see where effort might begin
To make an end of such a misery.

Cowrie. Affliction's waters, sweeping over the soul,
Will harrow a channel, rending it deep and wide,
Through which the river of your thoughts
Must bend their course to God.

Hugo. Yes, waters of affliction—but a sea
Of molten shame, whose slow and sullen wave
Tosses upon the shores of infamy
The riven wreck that cannot sink from sight,
To slowly shatter it—what floats in that?

Cowrie. On sorrow's flood alone we can advance.
If it should bear you past the common lot,

Learn all you can ; there'll be a use for it.
God never wastes a noble instrument.
If you are chosen, strain and stress must come ;
But wisdom follows on.

Hugo. Must we learn misery ?

Cowrie. Before our work endures, we must endure.
That truly human note that thrills the heart
Swells from the quivering cord of hard-wrung life
Bound to the base, yet straining to the true,
When o'er that trembling strand sweeps sorrow's
bow,

Drawn by the nerveless hand of evil chance.

Hugo. The power to struggle is itself relief.
That I had power to strive, to force myself
Into some dread encounter with distress ;
But all to face and nothing to be fought,
Endurance sole resource, and when endured,
Still, still the brand of shame !

Cowrie. What shame can come to you ?

Hugo. There where my love took life, my honour
dwelt.

My spirit knelt before the reverence
I gave to her, and hoped to rise by it.
And there it fell ; upon my threshold stands
A woman who forgot she was a wife.

Cowrie. Is that the wild assertion of a doubt,
Or truth's own terror ?

Hugo. Miserable truth !

Cowrie. What we believe to live has life for us,
And yet may lack existence. Wait and hope.
Error is easy, and the mind once tuned
To one strong note unconsciously supplies
A single strain to all it mingles in,
And hearkens to its incidence alone.

Hugo. I never looked for this ; my wretched
thought
Shrank from suspicion, not from certainty.

Cowrie. From certainty ! You speak of certainty.
How recollection surges up the view
Of one who fell, and spoke of certainty !

Hugo. Another such as I ?

Cowrie. As you might be ; for he, alas ! had lost
The opportunity to hesitate.

Hugo. Would his fate teach me mine ?

Cowrie. It might do so ; it fashioned out my
own,
Carving me free the trammels of the world,
That held me in relief.

Hugo. If it would aid me, tell me.

Cowrie. It sent me to the priesthood long ago.

Hugo. It never could have touched you.

Cowrie. Briefly I offer to recount to you
Events that gave direction to my life.
My mother fell from Italy's steep cliff
Into death's haven on the shore beneath.
My father travelled far ; he did not come ;
The last sad rites were mine—were mine alone.
He sent me his commands—a priestly life.
I took my lot, and then from fifteen years
To thirty-three I saw his face no more.
At last he came—I had my office then.
We journeyed by his wish toward the spot
Where she was found.
That night beneath the stars we paced the strand ;
In silent sympathy we reached the rock
She fell beside, and there he, kneeling down,
Poured forth a father's crime upon a son.
' My son,' he cried—' my son, child of my flesh,
And spiritual father to my soul,
She did not fall ! Oh, just, avenging God,
I thrust her down ! I'd reason to be mad—
Reason indeed to fear her frailty.
For eighteen years unspoken, unabolved,
I've born my burden. Pity me, my son,

And mingle human pardon with Divine
Upon my sin and shame.'

Hugo. And you?

Cowrie. Silent I stood, war at its worst within.
Her son with his son battled, as the priest
Strove to rise victor over human strife.
While each still struggled for the mastery,
He spoke again: 'I felt the night she died
There was no further step to certainty.
No sooner had my vengeance been achieved,
Than all my doubts rose up to drive me mad.
What had seemed dark as night grew pale as dawn;
The death of fear gave birth to temperance,
And reason, that had urged me to my fall,
Took arms against me. Oh, my son, my son!
Your calling is compassion. Pity me,
Absolve me, ere we part. That I repent
You cannot doubt indeed. If in your life
You find some mortal eager to avenge
Too full and foul a wrong, tell him my story.
Tell him, if woman's weak, to lift no hand
In punishment upon her; let the Church
Take all such sinners and find pardon for them.
Who metes out justice must himself be just.
'Tis here we fail.' He ceased, and I forgave.
We parted then; he climbed the eastern cliff;
I never saw him more.

Hugo. No wonder you remember such a scene
And such a warning.

Cowrie. That night held other lessons; as I knelt,
A veil seemed thrown around me, blinding out
All hope in heaven or earth. Vast solitude
Seemed all experience, all life, all fate.
The echo of my loneliness seemed moaning o'er the
sea,
When, from some distant hill, a convent bell
Tolled out a holy summons from despair.

Thin grew the veil around ; returning sight
For one brief moment touched the infinite.
The pains and passion of mortality
Shrank back abashed by human destiny,
And visit me no more.

Hugo. You kill the right to suffer ; but the pain
Goes throbbing on. I cannot use your eyes.

Cowie. I could not hope so. Revelation waits
Upon appreciation ; but a time
May rush upon you. Bridle in your doubts ;
Keep silence to your wife ; all may be well.

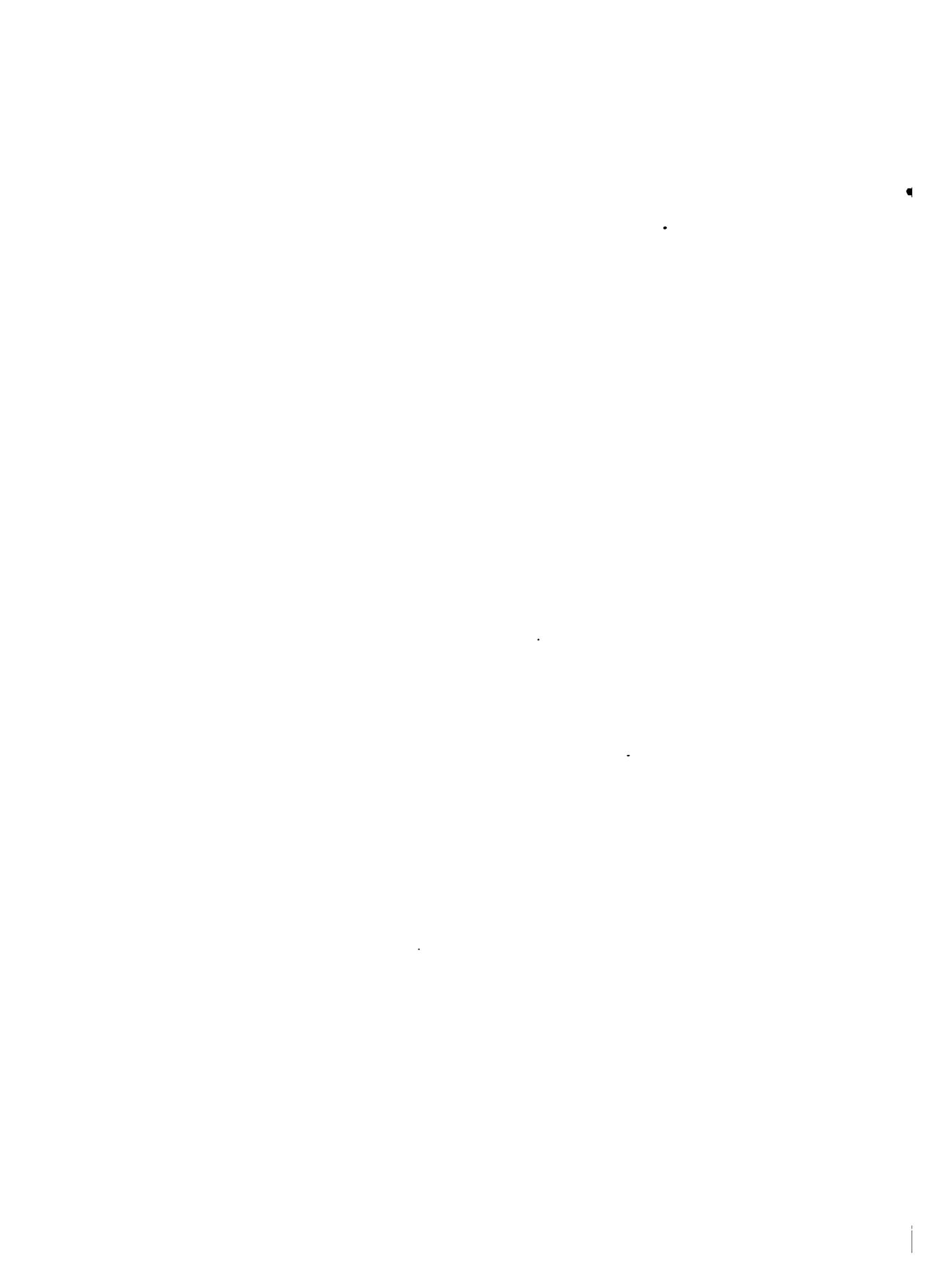
Hugo. All may, alas ! be ill.

Cowie. Still silence, though the victor's privilege,
The vanquished too can keep. All may be well.
If all be ill, then rise above yourself
And seek some duty ; it will come to you.
Take courage, and believe your need alone
Is great enough to overwhelm your prayer.
All, all will still be well, for to our God
A man is worth—his worth to fellow-men.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Before the Officers' Quarters.*

CASADO and LORIOS.





ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Before the Officers' Quarters.*

CASADO and LORIOS.

Lorios :

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HICH will it be ?

Casado. Arrago ; not a doubt of it.

Lorios. You doubt her interest in Cam-puzano ?

Casado. That she is interested, I admit ;
But there it stops ; I know the source of it.

Lorios. What is it, then ?

Casado. She thinks there is a mystery about him.

Lorios. In his arrival ?

Casado. Ay.

Lorios. Have you the little key to unlock the great secret ?

Casado. Not of his coming.

Lorios. Of what, then ?

Casado. Of her suspicion of the cause of it.

Lorios. Let me confirm your judgment.

Casado. At least you'll do no harm. You recollect
The last competitor with Arrago ?

Lorios. Avendon, you mean.

Casado. The man himself. He married in Cadiz.

Lorios. Whence Campuzano comes.

Casado. You see the outlines of it ?

Lorios. Very indistinctly.

Casado. I do not think she knows, but know she
thinks

That Campuzano envies Avendon,
And once was suitor to the wife he won.

Lorios. To this account you place her interest ?

Casado. I do.

Lorios. Has she told you any of this ?

Casado. She told me nothing ; but so much she
asked

I gathered all.

Lorios. Shall you tell Arrago ?

Casado. Not I. He'd tread upon my interests,
And call it humour ; let him guard his own.

Lorios. We're quite agreed. Will there be trouble
between them ?

Casado. Nothing surprises in a jealous man.

Lorios. Here comes one of them.

Enter CAMPUZANO.

Casado. Where's Geminez ?

Campuzano. I parted from him in the market-
place.

Some trick had seized his fancy. He'd not wait,
But rushed away for a confederate.

Lorios. Is it for our benefit ?

Campuzano. For Arrago's, I think.

Casado. To soften his feelings towards you.

Campuzano. I hardly think it.

Lorios. There's not much jest in Arrago's dislike.
He waits his time.

Casado. Let it be Friday, if his time should come.
He's very superstitious.

Campuzano. I care no more for what the future
holds
Of his malpractice than I fear the past.

I but regret your even intercourse
Should be deranged by bitter difference
'Twixt one of you, and one who lately came
Among you as a stranger.

Lorios. You're less a stranger to our comradeship
Than Arrago, who holds himself aloof;
And when he stoops, or fancies that he stoops,
To our light level, hustles in with him
Some awkward essence of bad fellowship,
To scare the genial spirit that pervades
Our circle, formed by common interest,
Maintained by common trust.

Campuzano. I thank you for your kind assurances,
But cannot thrust aside the uneasy thought
That all of you have lived in peace with him,
And I alone have broken into strife.

Casado. 'Tis true, if peace be lack of open war,
That we have lived in peace with Arrago.

Enter ARRAGO.

Arrago. Who goes to the masquerade to-night ?

Casado. I do.

Lorios. And I.

Campuzano. And I.

Casado. Do you go, Arrago ?

Arrago. I shall not miss it. Who's on guard to-night ?

Casado. Geminez.

Arrago. He will regret it.

Casado. I believe he does.

Arrago. Someone should change with him.

Casado. Will you ?

Arrago. Not I ! Had I been latest to arrive,
It might have been my duty.

Campuzano. I am the latest, and I offered it,
But he would not agree.

Arrago. He understood you.

Campuzano. Señor Arrago, perhaps you do not.

Arrago. What a loss !

Campuzano. Keep back your insults, or I'll answer them.

Arrago. Truculent lambkin !

Campuzano. You need not speak it plainer. When you will.

Arrago. Why, now ! [They draw and fence.]

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lopez. Down with your weapons till your country needs !

Arrago, sheathe your sword. Must I blame you ?

Arrago. We did but exercise.

Lopez. Such exercises teach no useful art.

I do not seek the cause ; but this must cease.

I have your word of honour, Campuzano,

There'll be no more of it ?

Campuzano. I pledge my word.

Lopez. You also, Arrago ?

Arrago. As you command it.

Lopez. Remember, man may claim his honours from Not what he did, but what he passed undone ; Not what he was, but what he tried to be ; Not what he taught, but what we learned from him ; Not all he strove to know, but to forget.

Come with me, Arrago.

[*LOPEZ and ARRAGO excent.*

Casado. A better ending than I had expected.

Campuzano. There's nothing good about it.

[*Exit within.*

Casado. Can you understand all this ?

Lorios. Arrago comes from the Castle.

Casado. And the General after him.

Lorios. She has said ' No.'

Casado. I was wrong, then.

Lorios. It may be Campuzano.

Casado. Arrago thinks so.

Lorios. Here comes Geminez.

Enter GEMINEZ.

Geminez. There's magic in the world, could you
but catch it;

And here we have it.

Casado. What have you there?

Geminez. A means to give you all the joys of drink
Without the trouble and expense of drinking.

Lorios. What's in the phial?

Geminez. Taking this liquid in a cup of wine,
You're drunk without the pleasing preface to it.

Lorios. For whom is it?

Geminez. What say you to our comrade Arrago,
To send him reeling to the masquerade?

Casado. It must not be to-night.

Geminez. Why not?

Casado. He has just quarrelled with Campuzano.

Geminez. To the sword's point?

Casado. They had begun the dance where each
one strives

To lose his partner, when the Don came in,
And stopped it then and after.

Geminez. I should have seen that.

Lorios. 'Twas but a moment.

Geminez. And no advantage?

Lorios. None.

Geminez. Whom could I give it to, then?

Casado. Take it yourself.

Geminez. Not I.

Casado. Is it sure to act?

Geminez. Unless the old man lied.

Casado. And swift to act ?
Geminex. Unless the old man lied.

Enter SOLDIER with a letter.

Casado (taking it). Campuzano !

Enter CAMPUZANO.

Campuzano. What is it ?
Geminex. She has written at last. Here it is.
Campuzano (reading). Who brought it ?
Soldier. The messenger is waiting without.
Campuzano. I will come to him. [Exit SOLDIER.

I have a message here
Which must be answered. Do not wait for me.
I'll meet you at the masquerade.

Geminex. Send the messenger in here. We'll give
him a cup of wine.

Campuzano. Very well. [Exit.
Casado. Shall you dose Love's messenger ?
Geminex. Let me see him first.
Casado. How will you get him home ?
Geminex. Let him sleep it off first, just as we do
with you.

Lorios. There's something stately striding in.

Enter PICAZO.

Geminex. Welcome to you. Are you at liberty
To take a message for me ?
Picazo. Quite at your service, señor.
Geminex. Good news ! A cup of wine before you
start.

Picazo. Thank you, señor ; but I rarely take wine.

Geminex. Nay, I insist upon it.

Picazo. One cup, then, señor.

Geminex. Here it is.

Picazo. I thank you, señor. Good fortune to Spain and her army! [Drinks.

Geminez. Well, what of it?

Picazo. It has a taste of its own, señor, which is a matter of taste.

Lorios. Another cup?

Picazo. No, thank you. What service can I do you?

Geminez. Ah! Tell your mistress—

Picazo. I have no mistress.

Geminez. Then, don't tell her.

Picazo (unsteadily). Don't tell her, not if you wish it.

Geminez. You will remember?

Picazo. Yes, yes. Good-day, señor.

Geminez. Another cup before you go?

Picazo. No, no. Don't tell her. [Exit.

Casado. Not much effect.

Geminez. Too much of a rascal.

Casado. Give me your honest drunkard before your sober rascal.



ACT III.

SCENE 2.—*A Room in FATHER COWRIE'S house.*

COWRIE and CAMPUZANO.

Cowrie:

BE sure that he who can forget himself
Will stamp on others' hearts a memory
Not easily forgot.

Campuzano. I can forget myself, if there
be need.

You would persuade me reasons thickly throng
Against my visiting the masquerade.

As you guard others, put me on my guard.

I am attentive, more than half disposed
To do your bidding.

Cowrie. The knowledge cannot harm, and yet its use
Would be unfitting. Can you be discreet?

Campuzano. I will not speak of it.

Cowrie. I trust you, then. The Countess Avendon
You knew before her marriage.

Campuzano. Very little.

Cowrie. That is all.

Campuzano. Why, what's in that?

Cowrie. I'm pleased to see your true astonishment.
No thought of her inhabited your breast
To guide you here.

Campuzano. No, not the shadow of it.

Cowrie. How rumour falsifies! Her husband
dreads

Some purpose in you. Let suspicion die
On your effacement; stay away to-night.
'Tis little, but it may be read as much.

Campuzano. Has that inspired their questions? I
recall

A colouring to incidents and words
Such rumours might suggest. This soon expires.
I'll see to that.

Cowrie. By denying it?

Campuzano. Emphatically.

Cowrie. To draw in your defence, before attack
Is even threatened, challenges attack.
That is not wise; your promise also holds,
And silence must be kept.

Campuzano. I had forgotten.

Cowrie. If he should quarrel with you, though your
cause

Were innocence itself, it would attract
Some prejudice on any future strife.
A brawling reputation weighs upon
A righteous indignation, and destroys
The force of just resentment. Turn aside
From all those actions, that impartial eyes
Would construe as the signs of character
Unworthy of a Spanish gentleman.
Will you let me advise?

Campuzano. I would not be the cause of further
strife.

Cowrie. Renounce this masquerade. Let Avendon
Discern his folly in the steady light
Of your avoidance and indifference.
Suspicions such as these are as the sands
That swallow all, sparing no single part.
There's no mixed motive in the jealous heart.

Campuzano. I'll do your bidding, and exchange to-night

Geminez' duties for the masquerade.

I vouch for his agreement.

Cowrie. 'Tis all I wish. Let but your action track
The footsteps of decision, all is well.

Campuzano. I will not fail. The thanks I owe
to you
I humbly give.

Cowrie. I am rewarded well. Adieu to you.

Campuzano. Adieu! [Exit CAMPUZANO.

Cowrie. Picazo's way is plain—to haunt her steps
And yet avoid her, thus in Avendon
To feed suspicion, and in him alone.

Had Campuzano gone, it were not safe
To play his part. Would that the deed were o'er,
Their parting over! for my purpose faints.
I, who unmoved could see a nation reel
In mad despair and bloody ecstasy,
So that its agony prepare the ground
That Rome might plant a sterner standard on,
To be unmanned by one poor mortal cry!
Strange are our ways, and strange our sympathies.
The man who claims to love the multitude
Has only hatred for each member of it;
While he to whom a nation's woes were naught,
One single woe would forfeit all to soothe.
Down, down, thou human heart! I have my work:
Thou canst not move me from it.

Enter PICAZO, staggering and roaring with laughter.

Cowrie. What calls for mirth?

Picazo. Something's drunk.

Cowrie. It seems so.

Picazo. Is this chair drunk, or am I? [Chuckles.

Cowrie. Be still.

Picazo (apologetically). You're so like a goat I met.

Cowrie. Do you know what you do, and at what cost ?

Picazo. Oh, how I love thee !

Cowrie. Drowned in a little wine, the cost of it !

I fall with it, I promised them success.

Failure to-night means failure for all time.

Success meant my advancement ; still, there's room To count upon success.

Picazo. 'Tis a room, then—thought I was at sea.

Cowrie. Good friend, you'd like some wine.

Picazo. Yes ; a good man's always ready for anything good. [COWRIE gives him wine.

Picazo. Pretty creature ! (Drinks.) S'more wine.

[COWRIE gives it him.

Picazo (spilling it). There's red rain to-night—sic !

[Tosses up the wine and falls off to sleep.

Cowrie. So I must go myself. Perhaps 'tis best.

The height so near my own, the mask and cloak,

The hair and beard at hand, all indicate

And coincide beyond coincidence

To mark the hand of fate. The sword as well

May be of use, with self-control behind.

'Tis Sicily again. She needs a sword.



ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Public Gardens. Hall in the background, with broad steps leading down. Doors open. Dancers can be seen. Music. People scattered through the Gardens.*

CASADO and LORIOS, meeting.





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SCENE I.—*The Public Gardens. Hall in the background, with broad steps leading down. Doors open. Dancers can be seen. Music. People scattered through the Gardens.*

CASADO and LORIOS, meeting.

Lorios :

 HE night's near gone. Have you made
use of it ?

 Casado. Not too much waste. Is Cam-
puzano here ?

Lorios. Yes, with a golden arrow on his breast.

Casado. It's like him ; yet there is a difference.

I touched him lately on the shoulder-knot,
And spoke a few words to him.

Lorios. What then ?

Casado. He merely shrugged his shoulders, and
passed on.

Catching him by the cloak, I stayed his path.
He turned, and whispered softly in my ear :
'I wish that I may pass unknown to-night.'

Lorios. You let him then pass on ?

Casado. 'Twas only fair ; if he's a secret part
To play unknown, let us not interfere.

Lorios. He can't elude the eyes of Arrago.

Casado. That's not his plan. He's puzzled me to-night.

He has not ventured near Camellia.

Lorios. Can you read that?

Casado. She has not overlooked what I have seen.

He's always near the Countess Avendon.

Lorios. With her?

Casado. Not with, but near. It will not stir remark.
You would not note without you watched for it.

Lorios. As you have done.

Casado. It interests me.

Lorios. Does she know?

Casado. She seems unconscious. I have danced
with her.

He keeps a certain distance, but he's there.

Lorios. Is a certain distance a safe one?

Casado. Not were I her husband.

Lorios. Here comes the Count. I go to dance again.

Casado. And so will I.

[*CASADO and LORIOS exunt.*

HUGO and CAMELLIA come down the steps.

Camellia. Love, light, and laughter combat in
the air

For kingship of the night. How still you are!

Does mirth displease you, or does silence fall

Upon your spirit in its pleasured moods?

Has marriage changed you? Though in former
times

You never led us in our merriment,

You followed well. How much your wife's admired!

Hugo. Who would not wish his wife to be admired?
If we conceal our treasures, they are none.

Camellia. I fully understand what influence
She would possess. What power some women have
To win and to retain, for ever loved
If loved but once! I'm sure she's one of these.

Hugo. Her husband thanks you for your estimate.
Camellia. She's fortunate in you. Some women
lose

The lover's service with the husband's rights.
She's spared that sacrifice, I fully see.

Enter ARRAGO aside.

Hugo. You are observant.

Camellia. It is the woman's province to observe.
They do it, too. You cannot match us there.
We can't control and fashion circumstance,
To mark what's coming, and prepare for it.

Hugo. We do fail there.

Camellia. You do indeed. You overlook so much.
Now, do you not ?

Hugo. Is that my fault ?

Camellia. You are too generous, almost unjust,
Too free with all your treasures, lack the pride
That adds such keen delight to ownership.
If you disdain possession, other minds
Are apt to overlook that you possess.

Hugo. We can remind them.

Camellia. How true that is ! You only need to say,
' Hold ! that is mine,' and all's restored at once.

Hugo. Shall I restore you to the throng within ?

[*Exeunt.*]

Arrago. Forced to observe, while observation yields
Ever the sight of other men's success !
The looker-on, while others play the game
I hold a stake in—cursed impotence !
The marriage bell of Avendon had rung
A danger from my path ; yet danger's flight
Disclosed new danger. She'll not let me speak ;
Silenced again to-day, yet not dismissed.
An after-chance, if Campuzano fail.
I know no man who robs me of my chance,
And steals not more than he had reckoned on.

The time may come when I'll assert myself.
 A man can rule with even equal strength ;
 And I could match her. Campuzano seems
 To be detached ; he merely hovers round
 The Countess Avendon, whose husband fills
 The vacant station by Camellia—
 A pretty combination, on my word,
 That excludes me. Ah ! here comes my man,
 Bends to adore, his shoulders shrunk to love's
 Protecting stoop, that hungers to caress.
 I'll watch this from afar. [Exit ARRAGO aside.

COWRIE and STELLA come down the steps.

Cowrie. The moon displays her province of delight,
 And of her sombre mantle robs the night,
 Only to clothe her in the silver robe
 That holds such magic charm for youth and love.
 Who would not wish on such a night as this
 To freely claim youth's greatest privilege,
 The uncantered love of life—the life of love ?
 These gardens, not content with excellence,
 Have borrowed double beauty from the night.
 Shall we walk through them ?

Stella. There's beauty that will please both eye
 and ear
 Within our reach. Let us not roam away,
 But stay within the sphere the music fills.

Cowrie. Here is a rustic seat. Will you sit down ?
 The fountain's waters dancing on the leaves
 Blend with the strains that float along the air
 In harmonies I never heard before.
 'Tis like the rain of music from the skies,
 And fills the heart with strangest melodies.

Stella. How oft unnoticed we pass beauty by,
 Unless some quicker eye has dwelt on it—
 Some readier appreciation praised it !

I fully felt the magic of the night.
Your words, expressing all I only feel,
Have added to its charm.

HUGO comes down the steps.

Cowrie. Words tell us what we know. Who can
believe,
Unless some feeling murmurs, 'This is right'?
What argument so strong as sympathy?
What note in Nature as the voice that stirs
The soul's experience of former state
We style imagining? Though words assert,
We only know what's mirrored in ourselves.
All else is but the shadow of a dream,
That forms to fade away.

Stella. Your words are strange, and yet their theme
recalls
Some bygone moment. Surely in the world
We've met before to-night. Perhaps you may
Recall me if I tell my father's name.

Cowrie. You never knew me, Countess. Strange
to tell,
You roused the spirit of a bygone time
Within my breast—a time both sad and sweet.
Some vague resemblance to a once-loved form,
That floats upon you, conjured through the years
The image of the past.

Stella. Do I remind you of a long-lost love?
Cowrie. A varied likeness. Might I see your face?
[STELLA unmasks.

Cowrie. It lacks her sad expression; but the form
Could scarcely be more like.

Stella. Was her fate so sad?
Cowrie. She left her husband. I had lost her so,
And he had wronged her. In the cloistered walls
(Her only refuge) she abode in peace—

Not peace that is the blinding of desire,
 The blank of ignorance, the flight from self ;
 But peace that is the folding of the wings
 Of some poor weary spirit that has buoyed
 Itself so long amid the striving winds,
 And found a rest at last.

[*The clock strikes twelve. Dancers move into the hall.*

Cowrie. The hour has come to throw away the mask ;

All gather in the hall. Will you go in ?

Stella. No ; I'll not move within the crowded hall.
 Do you go in ; I would be left alone.

Cowrie. As you direct, my pleasure is to do.

[*Bends as though taking something off the seat, and exit kissing it.*

Hugo. At last !

[*Follows him.*

Stella. Her husband wronged her, and she was like me—

What wrong, I wonder ? Surely not neglect ;
 That were too like. How changed he seems to be !
 I held him once. How did he fall away ?
 It was not even just. Here comes the throng.

MASKERS come down the steps, followed by SINGERS.

SONG.

'The midnight hour
 Reveals your power
 To revel in disguise ;
 To-night's glad law
 Removes all bar
 To loved and loving eyes.
 Quick to our sight
 Disclose delight.
 Masks are no longer lawful ;

Ill deeds confess,
For pardon press,
For pride in guilt is awful.

[*All unmash.*]

'Good-night! we sing;
May laughter ring
In joyous peals around you!
Once more the dance,
With radiant glance,
Until the dawn has found you.
Good-night! good-night!
May love and light
Be to you all attentive.
To love we tend,
Love is our end,
And love is the incentive.'

Lopez. You are not tired, I trust?

Stella. A very little. Have you seen my husband?

Lopez. I saw him as I came towards the hall;
He went the other way.

Stella. All by himself?

Lopez. Yes, quite alone.

Stella. Would you, I pray you, take me by the path
That he pursued? I wish to speak with him.

Lopez. With pleasure, dearest lady. When you
will,

I welcome your commands.

Stella. Oh, hasten! Let us haste! I feel afraid.



ACT IV.

SCENE 2.—*A remote part of the Gardens. Wall along one side; seat beside it.*

COWRIE (*alone*):



E followed me, and still the moments pass !
What is this murmuring I hear around ?
Who calls on Francis Cowrie through the
night ?
A warning from the dead to him who dies
Forbidden superstition styles the voice
That parts no lips, that leaves no human tongue,
Yet falls on human ears. Ah ! here he comes.

Enter HUGO.

Hugo. Señor Campuzano, I know you ;
And you should know me, though I seem to you
Fit object for your scornful rivalry.
Know that I may be rivalled, but not scorned.
Restore what you have taken from my wife,
Or draw your sword. [COWRIE takes out a paper.

Hugo. Add coward to your titles, though the term
Dishonour me the more.

[COWRIE thrusts the paper in his breast, and
draws his sword.

Hugo (drawing). Here's 'God defend the right'
before we cross.
Repeat it, if you dare.

Cowrie. Married man !

Hugo. No more !

[They fence. HUGO is disarmed ; COWRIE
puts his foot upon the sword.

Hugo. Take your right.

Cowrie. Bah !

[Takes out the paper, thrusts his sword
through it, and taunts his adversary.

Hugo (staggering). Oh, my heart, my heart !

[COWRIE drops his guard; HUGO rushes in,
wrests the sword from him, and leaps
upon the seat.

Hugo. Now am I armed indeed. Once more we'll
meet,

When I have learned the truth. [HUGO leaps over.

Cowrie. I reckoned well your temper for that point.

You had not valued all it testifies

Without you fought for it. Now seek the truth ;

And if you find it, you'll believe it false.

Never a fairer field for fruitful strife

Than 'twixt pride wronged and pride that's in the
wrong.

Safely away, I trust. [Looks over the wall.

Enter ARRAGO ; takes up HUGO's sword, and stabs
COWRIE in the back.

Arrago. Thus I avenge myself and Avendon,
And in the act am quit with Avendon
For all I owed him, too.

Cowrie (raising himself). Hold, hold ! I am not.

Arrago. Lie still, and lie no more.

[Stabs him through the throat. COWRIE
falls back.

Am I excluded now ? I think this sword,
Avenging me, proclaims my innocence.

Recline by him. I will exclude myself,
And issue by the way of Avendon.

[ARRAGO gets over the wall. COWRIE dies.

Enter LOPEZ and STELLA.

Lopez. I think we should return. He doubtless seeks
Your presence in the hall.

Stella. What's that?

Lopez. There's someone fallen. Stay one moment,
Countess.

Stella. Oh, Holy Mother! Look! My husband's
sword!

Lopez. 'Tis not your husband. Through the middle
throat

His pilgrimage is past.

Stella. My husband may be wounded nigh to death
While I stand here. Oh! let me hasten home.
Still, still there's home.

Lopez. I must secure assistance for the dead.

Stella. I had forgot. I cannot think to-night.
Oh, Hugo, Hugo! blood upon your hands!
I cannot—oh, our home, our tainted home!
Whence comes the red flash that I see it in?
It is not red; 'tis built of cold, gray stone—
There's naught red in it. Oh, my life, my life!
Come to me, come! Oh, the sky's blood-red—
My husband made it so—red, angry red—
Oh, not for evermore!



ACT IV.

SCENE 3.—*A Room in Avendon.*

HUGO (*alone, looking at a paper*) :

INES—only lines! No—not one written word!

And there a star. It seems to be a plan
To guide him to some spot, some secret
spot.

The star's a meeting-place; there in the bend
Lies fallen honour. God, let heaven fall,
And to the bosom of our mother earth
Crush back the frail, the foul, the wanton thing
Thou gav'st the name of woman: 'Tis my home
Outlined before my eyes, to guide the thief
To steal my honour. There the little door
That star determines, leading to her room.
O Death, if thou hast mercy, come to me!
Life drawing on while dawn and eve alike
Proclaim my sentence: 'Thou shalt smile no more
Save once—upon the grave of her thou lov'st.'
That it had never been—those cursed hours
When I believed and lived and loved and hoped,
To haunt me on through all! Oh, thrice blest
heart
That never knew such moments held such store!
What pang of torture racks like shattered hope?

Enter STELLA.

Stella. Hugo, what have you done ? you've fought
to-night.

I saw him lie there—oh, the awful sight !
It haunts me still.

Hugo. You come to me. Am I so much despised,
So worthy of contempt—perhaps I am—
To tell me that I fought your love to-night,
And with a vile untruth upon your lips
You tell me that he fell ? What would you now ?
Are you not satisfied ? I gave you all,
No limit to my reverence and love,
No bounds to trust, no measure to my faith ;
And you, despising trust and scorning faith,
Despised their life in me. What would you now ?
What is there but the principle of life
To nourish nothing left within me now ?
There lies your lover's sword. What would you
more ?

Stella. My lover's sword ? you killed him as my
love ?

You doubted me ? Oh, one of us is mad !
What love had I but you ? I never had.

You could not think me false. What man was he ?

Hugo. I killed no love of yours. To-night we
met.

He conquered me, as he had conquered you.
Each struck for you, though he restrained his hand,
When I stood forfeiting my life to him.

Stella. You did not give such mercy in your turn.

Hugo. I left him well, unwearied and unhurt.

Stella. And he lies dead beside your naked sword ;
I saw him so. Oh, Hugo, are you mad ?

Hugo. Ay, mad indeed, if sanity be faith ;
For that I hold no more.

Stella. You did not kill him ?

Hugo. He died from his own passion, if he died.
I had no hand in it.

Stella. I can believe you, if you tell me so.
I am not so untrue in everything,
That I must doubt the very life of truth.

Hugo. Leave that to the deceived. Know that
the hand
That struck your lover down (if that be true),
On his triumphant way, led me to proofs
Of all you really are. Deny no more.

Stella. My husband wounds my love indeed to-
night,
And may prove victor even to its death,
If this unpardonable wrong goes on.

Hugo. You trifle with a phrase at such a time !
But, then, you cannot look with others' eyes,
Or all of this had seemed as vile to you,
As it has been to me.

Stella. Have you no sense of what is just to me ?
Are faith and love and honour dead in you,
With every quality to claim respect ?

Hugo. How little honour you or I possess
You only know ; though love may outlast truth,
Yet never will a love that's worth the name
Beat living wings over a dead faith's tomb.
It may lie where it fell. God help it, then,
Its glory gone, its beauty all defiled,
As mine has done with me.

Stella. Faith dead, love tarnished, honour but a
mock !
Oh, is there nothing holy in the world
That I may pray you to be loyal to ?

Hugo. Oh, woman, when you killed my reverence,
That might have raised myself above myself,
You killed your influence too. No more it calls,
That silver trumpet of a woman's truth,
My soul to higher things. I curse you not.

What words can touch you now ? I loved you well ;
And where I loved, the altar of my life,
The haven of my heart, I am undone.

Stella. Believe me, Hugo ; trust me that you err.
How can I tell you, how explain to you,
When I am ignorant ? Oh, trust me still !
I see you feel, and yet you have no right.
Is this your love ? Is this unbounded faith ?
I could excel you there. Oh, love, unsay
Your words of accusation. Tell me all
That may be said against me ; but refrain
From sharing in it. I deny your right
To judge the undefended. Nay, forgive ;
I will be patient still.

Hugo. The knowledge slowly came. It crept o'er
sense

To crush down feeling, and it came to stay.
Be silent now. What is there left to say ?

Stella. You will not hear me. Though I am your
wife,
And owe you duty, I am woman too ;
And in the name of womanhood I spurn
Your insult from me : I am true to you.
Will you believe me ? Speak what's in your heart,
That's all of worth to me.

Hugo. And from the heart I say I know you
false ;
Though to what bounds your frailty extends
You only know.

Stella. Husband, accuser, judge, before the Throne
Of One whose mercy one day you will need,
Come with me now. I vow my innocence,
My truth in thought, my truth in word and deed.
Oh, Holy Mother, aid your erring child !
I vow no more ; to Heaven I appeal
To raise the right to light. Oh, let that light
Fall on me now, and let my husband's heart

One moment know my own. Oh, praised be God !
The Fountain of all truth has heard my truth.
You know it as you stand.

Hugo. My wife !

Stella. Have you remembered that I am your wife ?
Has what is scorching me come home to you ?
I have a right to scorn. To you I looked
By human right, and what was once Divine,
For vindication 'gainst the whole wide world.
You heard and uttered slanders, and I writhe
With shame perhaps no guilt could rouse in me.
Can you believe, but for that holy bond
That links us two through all eternity,
I would have stooped to vow my innocence
After you doubted that which I denied ?
I never had forgot I was your wife.
The shame you made me feel was part for you,
Your degradation greater than my own ;
In that your own will took its share in it,
Made me remember that the woman owed
A duty which the man too soon forgot.
The world may know whate'er you choose to tell
When I am gone. My lord, we part to-night.
The haven that a husband's heart denies—
His home——

[*Noise without.*

Enter OFFICER.

*Officer. Your pardon, madam ; but the law de-
mands—*

I hold an order for the Count's arrest.

Stella. For what ?

Officer. The Count will be informed.

Stella. If you may tell me, pray you tell me now.

*Officer. Within the public gardens there was found
A murdered man, beside your husband's sword.*

*Stella. A murdered man ? A duel's fatal end
Is never counted crime.*

Officer. No, lady.

Stella. Was it no duel? He was lying there,
I almost had forgot—murdered, you say?
You never did that, Hugo?

Hugo. I do not think I did. The whole earth's mad.
If what I saw you do you never did,
Then what I never did I may have done.

Stella. He did not do it. Oh, my love, my love!
Would I might die to prove your innocence!
Oh, rouse yourself, my husband; I'll with you;
The truth is sure to come.

Hugo. My wife, be still.

Officer. What sword is that?

Hugo. I seemed to put it there.

Officer. It goes with us.

Casado (*speaking within*). I must go in.

Enter CASADO.

Casado. Forgive my haste. The mystery is
o'er.

Here's my authority for your release.

Hugo. Who killed him?

Casado. You never would believe the dead man's
name.

Hugo. Who was it?

Casado. It was Father Cowrie.

Stella. Oh, Holy Mother!

Hugo. Who?

Casado. 'Twas Father Cowrie; slain not for him-
self,

But that he masqueraded in a guise
That rendered him so like to Campuzano
That in his stead he fell.

Hugo. Was Campuzano at the masque to-night?

Casado. No; he had stayed away, unknown to us;
Or this had not occurred.

Hugo. Cowrie as Campuzano ! In such depths
What secrets may not lie ! Who struck him down ?

Casado. That I will tell. We were approaching
home,

When Campuzano joined and went with us.
Reaching our quarters, he thrust in the door,
And entering, faced Arrago alone.
With one great cry of horror and despair,
Shrieked Arrago, 'The dead are come to life !'
And with the words he fell. On rushing in,
We found him swooning, stretched along the floor.
Raising him up, we called his senses back.

When Campuzano caught his eye again,
He prayed us keep him off—to keep him off.
The truth was slowly sifting through despair,
That in a fit of mad and jealous rage
He'd struck the priest in Campuzano's stead.
I therefore spoke, and told him who was dead.
He broke from us, and, ere we could prevent,
Fell on his naked sword.

Hugo. And so he died.

Casado. Before his last breath passed his quivering
lips

He told us all. His hand had struck the blow,
And so he died.
At once I hastened to the authorities,
Who bade me hasten here.

Hugo. You did not come too soon. My thanks to
you !

I cannot thank you more. The night's dark work
Has shaken me a little.

Casado. Good-night to you. The dawn is near at
hand. [Exit with OFFICER.

Hugo. Death has been king to-night, and I his
slave,

The meekest of his servants, killed myself.
I cannot say 'Forgive.' Between us two

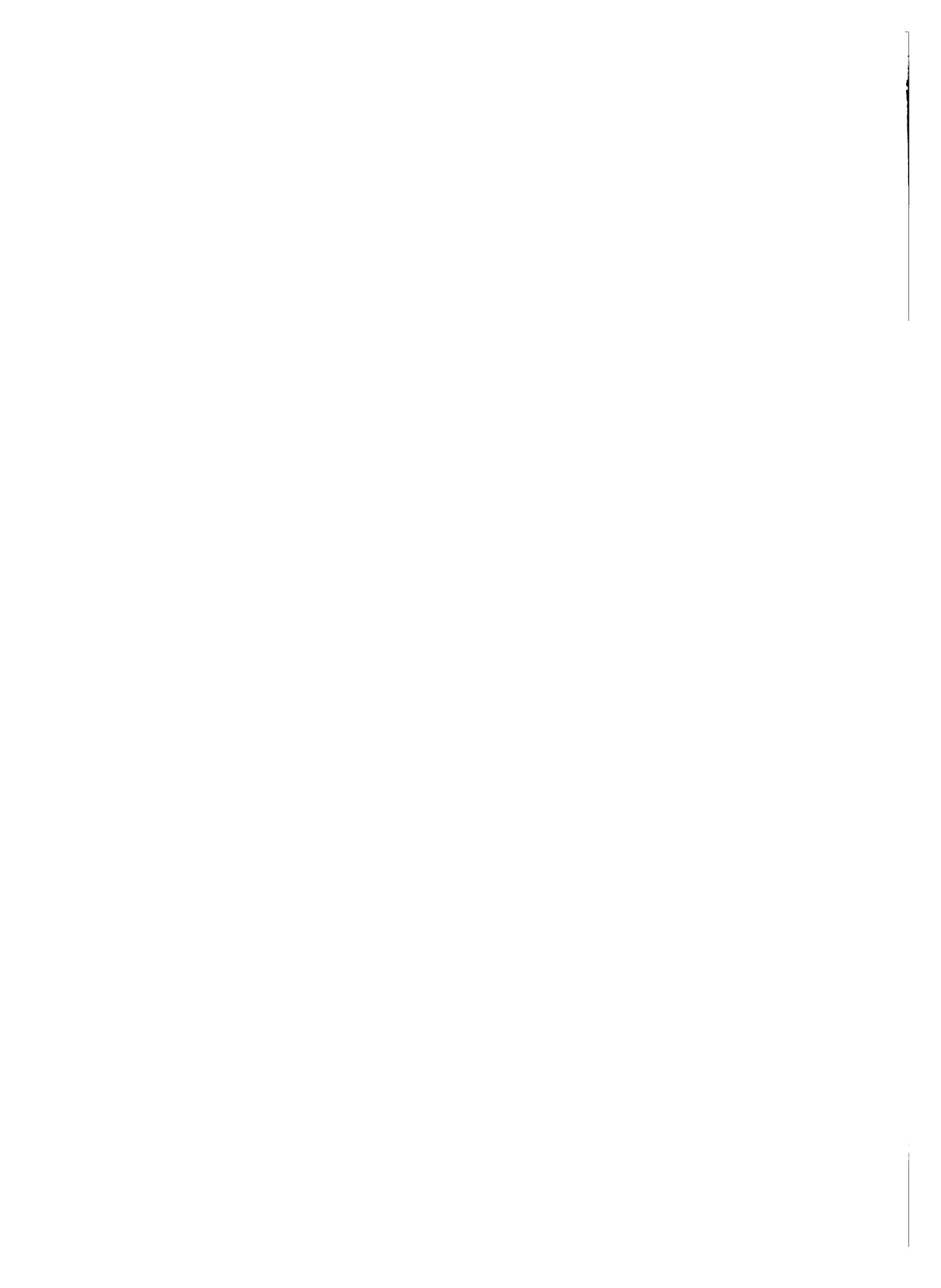
There flows the fatal river of offence
Regret can never cross. You know its springs
I never founded. Still, I let it run,
The dead man's hand controlling it and me.
If you will hear the method of my snare,
I think I see the reason there may rise
Some gentler thought for me. Not in excuse
I offer explanation. 'Tis your right;
Let no tears fall for me.

Stella. I weep for him who was our enemy.
To fall like that ! Oh, we who are alive,
To be forgiven, and to say, 'Forgive,'
We need no pity ! Unseen hands to-night
Have guided us and guarded us through all.
I do not want to judge—my heart needs you.









JUN 12 1959



